



TO: Members of the Governing Council

SPONSOR: David Naylor, President

DATE: January 15, 2007 for February 1, 2007

AGENDA ITEM: 6 (j) (ii)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION: Creation of the Position of Assistant Vice-President,
Student Life

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under the *Policy on Appointments and Remuneration*, the Governing Council reserves to itself the creation and appointment of certain University Officials on the recommendation of the President.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

n/a

HIGHLIGHTS:

See attached memorandum.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

Be It Resolved:

THAT the creation of the position of Assistant Vice-President, Student Life, be approved.



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

Jan 15/07

To Be for review & consideration

To: David Naylor, President
From: Vivek Goel, Vice-President and Provost
Date: January 14, 2007
Re: **Creation of the Position of Assistant Vice-President, Student Life**

Enhancing the student experience has emerged as our top priority in academic planning. I am accordingly very pleased to bring forward a recommendation for the creation of a new position, Assistant Vice-President, Student Life. This position gives additional and, arguably, overdue prominence to leadership in student services for the St. George Campus. Its creation will be funded from existing budgetary resources, and flows from a fundamental reorganization of the student affairs and student services portfolios. That reorganization is designed to bring U of T into structural alignment with peer institutions that have effectively addressed student service needs. The new organizational structure reflects advice received after a strategic review of these portfolios by Keeling & Associates (K&A), a reputable firm of external consultants that has worked with a wide variety of our American and Canadian peer institutions. I elaborate below on this position and the process of the review.

In April 2006, the Vice-Provost, Students initiated a review of the University's student life offices, programs and services. After a detailed self-study by each unit and an extensive assessment of Student Affairs, Student Services, and Hart House, recommendations were made for re-aligning and strengthening the structure, organization and administrative relationships of these divisions to support student success, enhance the student experience, improve the learning environment, and contribute more directly to the mission of the University. The attached document describes the proposed reorganization, reformation and renewal of the St. George Campus student life programs and services that flows from the review. The document includes information about the restructuring of student life programs and services, including:

- An outline of the project background, purpose, anticipated results and methodology
- An explanation of the proposed reorganization
- Next steps in the planning process
- A timeline and proposed organization chart

The principal objectives of the reorganized and renewed Student Life portfolio are to maintain and enhance our core services to students and to foster student learning. An integral component of the plan is a reorganization of the portfolio, including the creation of an Assistant Vice-President, Student Life position and the subsequent establishment of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students. The new AVP, Student Life will function as the senior student affairs officer on the St. George campus and will report directly to the Vice-Provost, Students. Reporting to this new position will be the leaders of the four program and service clusters (Student Development & Learning, Hart House, Community Engagement, Health Programs & Services) and the Central Student Life Operations group. This reorganization will help to address tri-campus issues as previously many of the offices had both university-wide policy responsibility and St. George campus operational responsibility. The AVP, Student Life will have operational responsibility for student services on the St. George campus for approximately 50,000 students, while the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students will have University-wide policy, assessment and crisis management responsibilities. Given the scope and scale of responsibilities, we have determined, in consultation with Human Resources, that an AVP rank is appropriate for this position. The AVP will work closely with the equivalent officers at UTM and UTSC to coordinate the delivery of services.

As the creation of this new position is part of a reorganization of the Vice-Provostial portfolio funding for the position will be from the existing budget for the portfolio. This proposal represents a part of my continuing efforts to professionalize the senior administration in the Vice-President and Provost's Office to provide a balance between senior academic officers and senior administrative officers in leadership roles. Over time, I will continue to reduce the number of Vice-Provosts in line responsibility roles as Assistant Vice-President positions are created. I indicated earlier that a change in structure will align us with best practices in American peer institutions. Organization charts will be tabled at the Executive Committee meeting to illustrate the type of student life positions that exist in administrative structures in some peer institutions.

If you are in agreement with this proposal, I would request that you recommend to the Governing Council, through the Executive Committee, the creation of the position of Assistant Vice-President, Student Life.

With this approval we will move forward to post the position and bring forward a recommendation for an appointment in due course.

University of Toronto
Office of the Vice-Provost, Students
Restructuring and Strengthening of Student Life Programs and Services

November 30, 2006

Introduction

In April 2006, the Vice-Provost, Students initiated a review of the University's student life offices, programs, and services with the assistance of Keeling & Associates, LLC (K&A), a higher education consulting firm based in New York City. After extensive assessment and a detailed self-study of Student Affairs, Student Services, and Hart House, K&A made recommendations in October for realigning and strengthening the structure, organization, and administrative relationships of these divisions to support student success, enhance the student experience, improve the learning environment, and contribute more directly to the mission of the University. In response, the University has begun a process of reorganization, reformation, and renewal in student life.

Reorganization of the student life portfolio is the first of three major steps required to rationalize and strengthen student life programs and services at the University. Once a new organizational and administrative structure is determined, a process of *reformation* will begin as offices restructure their relationships, programs, and services in a new alignment. This effort will reform the ways in which students view, understand, access, and use services. As reformation proceeds, all elements of student life will begin a process of *renewal* through which they will refocus their efforts on advancing student learning and development to support a better student experience and greater student success. This document summarizes the work done to date and describes the goals, methods, and timeline of the continuing consultative planning process.

It is important to note that the review has concentrated on structure and on relationships among divisions, not on the quality of the work performed by the staff of Hart House, Student Affairs and Student Services. The success of the new structure will depend on the continuing commitment and expertise of those staff, and should enable them to find greater reward in working in a context designed to support and enhance their strengths.

Purpose and Anticipated Results

The restructuring of student life programs and services has clear purposes: to enhance the student experience, improve student success, support student learning, and advance the goals and objectives of the University's strategic plan. Today, the organization of student life services impedes the University's capacity to provide a student experience that advances its mission and fulfills those purposes.

The current administrative framework and organizational structure in the portfolio of the Vice-Provost, Students depends on three parallel divisions (Student Services, Student Affairs, and Hart House). The roots of this unique structure originate in institutional culture and history, tactical decision-making, and the pressure of difficult administrative challenges. Its strengths

and weaknesses are at once a reflection and a microcosm of the University's federated academic structure, decentralized administrative model, and three-campus design.

Students find it difficult and confusing to understand, select, and access services that best meet their needs. There needs to be a clearer, shared, and unified vision about the purposes and roles of the departments and divisions in the portfolio as a whole, and about their individual or collective accountability for the quality of the student experience and for the achievement of important student learning and developmental outcomes. Greater and more consistent cooperation and collaboration among different programs and services, and within common services, such as counselling as delivered in different venues is essential. The size and scope of budgets and human resources are not generally commensurate with student outcomes for current programs and services. Departments in student life compete with each other for limited funds, and there are operational inefficiencies and overlaps induced by duplication and specialization of infrastructure and support services in the divisions of the portfolio

These problems do not stem from staff performance issues, but from systems concerns rooted in the current three-division, parallel structure and the competitive, rather than collaborative, environment it has generated. A reorganized, reformed, and renewed student life portfolio will permit professionals in all areas to do their best work more efficiently and effectively while providing students with far more consistent, understandable, rational, and accessible services that support their learning and enhance the quality of their University experience.

Review Methodology

The review of the student life portfolio was detailed, comprehensive, and broadly consultative, using mixed methods of assessment (qualitative and quantitative) with multiple interviews (including students), meetings, tours, and reviews of documents followed by the development and implementation of an intensive self-study process employing a unique assessment template that was completed by all departments in Student Services, Student Affairs, and Hart House. The self-study reports comprise a rich narrative and database that was supplemented by presentations and consultative discussion.

Reorganization

The planned framework of reorganization does not simply recapitulate and reorder existing departments; it reflects a close and thoughtful re-examination of the specific purposes, audiences and users, and desired outcomes addressed in each department in student life. The new organizational structure for the portfolio accounts for (1) an arrangement of programs, services, and activities that is both theoretically sound and administratively practical, and (2) a balance of central and distributed authority and governance. Recommendations for the reorganization therefore aggregated student life programs, activities, and services based on their primary audiences or users (students vs. the University and community), aligned them using valid conceptual models and known best practices, and located them in relation to the University's continuum of central and disseminated autonomy, structures and functions. The review also began a process of reconsideration of the relationships among student life programs on the St. George campus and those on the Mississauga (UTM) and Scarborough (UTSC) campuses.

The main points of the proposed reorganization include:

1. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students will be created to provide core University-wide services related to student life, including:

Assessment and Research
Communications

Crisis Response
Policy

2. The following departments, programs, and services will remain in the centrally administered student life portfolio of the Vice-Provost, Students:

Accessibility Services
Career Centre
Centre for Community Partnerships
Counselling Service
First Nations House
Hart House

Health Service
International Student Centre
Multifaith Centre and Programs
Psychiatric Services
Student Housing Service
Student Life Programs

3. The following departments, programs, and services will be relocated to the portfolio of the Vice-President, Human Resources & Equity:

Early Learning Centre
Family Care Office
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Resources and Programs

4. The Vice-Provost, Students will create a new senior administrative position responsible for the St. George student life departments, programs, and services listed in #2 and the infrastructure required to support them. This position will function as the senior student affairs officer on the St. George Campus and will report directly to the Vice-Provost, Students. Reporting to this new position will be the leaders of the four program and service clusters listed in #5 and of the central operations office noted in #6.
5. Based on student development and learning concepts and models, student life programs and services on the St. George campus in the portfolio of the new senior student life position will be grouped in these clusters:

Student Development & Learning

Career Centre
Health Promotion (now in Health)

Student Housing Service
Student Life Programs

Hart House

Student Programs
Art Gallery

Athletics and Recreation
Theatre

Community Engagement

Centre for Community Partnerships
First Nations House

International Student Centre
Multifaith Centre & Program

Health Programs & Services

Accessibility Services
Counselling Services

Health Service (clinical)
Psychiatric Services

6. Within the portfolio of the senior student life position, a central Student Life Operations group will reduce duplication and increase effectiveness by coordinating and aggregating information technology, human resources, budget and financial services, and related administrative functions for all four clusters.
7. The components of services that currently support student learning (for example: the learning strategists in Counselling and Learning Skills; the adaptive technology staff in Accessibility Services) will be located appropriately, quite possibly in the Student Development & Learning cluster, to provide support and professional development to central and divisional staff as well as to students.

Continuing Planning Process

The Vice-Provost, Students is continuing the planning process for reorganization, reformation, and renewal of the student life portfolio through:

- A two-level task force with (1) three working groups, each addressing one of the three primary student life clusters – learning and development, health, and community engagement, and (2) a coordinating group consisting of members of all three working groups. Members will be drawn from the University Community including colleges, University administration, and the student life portfolio. The task force will refine plans for the reorganization of student life programs and services with specific attention to creating new working arrangements that bring greater simplicity, consistency, and coordination to student programs and services, and with particular emphasis on how to optimize support for student learning.
- Implementation groups will activate the process of reformation of services after the task force completes its work in early 2007. The implementation groups, which will consist of representatives from the departments in each cluster of the new student life structure, will determine the actual day-to-day working arrangements, space assignments, and revised pattern of programs and services to be provided.
- Reorganization of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students, to embrace the core functions of communications, crisis response, policy, and assessment and research.
- Ongoing conversations among representatives of the three campuses regarding the working relationships of their student life programs and services. The University seeks to ensure consistency in services and policy, especially regarding professional standards, service quality, operational effectiveness, and the achievement of student learning.
- Reconsideration of the best administrative and organizational structure, service model, and profile of operation for learning support services on the St. George campus.

K&A will continue to be available to provide consultation, technical assistance, and guidance as we move through the planning process.

Timeline

The anticipated timeline for reorganization, reformation, and renewal in student life is:

- Completion of reorganization planning (two-level task force): December 2006 – March 2007
- Search for new Warden of Hart House: December 2006 – May 2007
- Relocation of departments from Vice-Provost, Students to Office of the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity: January 1, 2007
- Reorganization of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students: January 1, 2007
- Recruiting of senior student life position: January – April 2007
- Implementation work groups: March – June 2007
- Recruiting of leaders of three reorganized student life clusters: March – July 2007
- Full transition to new organizational structure: July – August 2007
- Renewal of programs and services to enhance student experience: July – December 2007

Organization Chart

The organization chart that follows provides a graphic representation of the reorganization plan described in this document.



